



# City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development  
Diane M. Sugimura, Director



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014957

Address: 2249 NE 46th St

Applicant: Jay Janette

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 08, 2014

Board Members Present: Martine Zettle (Chair)  
Ivan Begley  
Julia Levitt

Board Members Absent: Eric Blank  
Christina Pizana

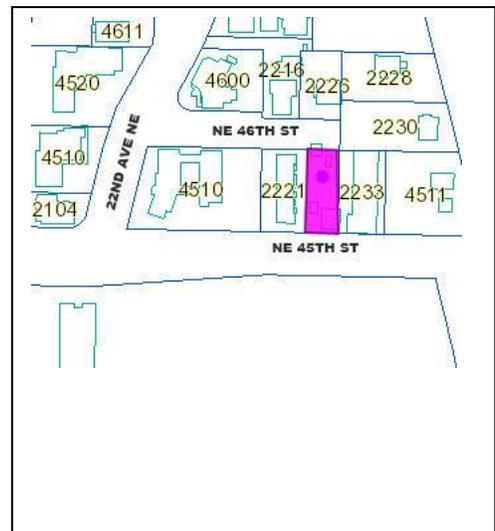
DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: LR3, Lowrise Multi-family 3.

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) MR  
(East) LR1  
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 6,837 square feet



Current Development: Vacant Lot

Access: Pedestrian/Vehicle access is proposed from NE 46th Street.

Surrounding Development: An existing four-story apartment building is to the east and a six-story apartment building is adjacent to the northeast. A single residential structure converted to office space to the northwest of the project site. A one-story retail/commercial use is across the street to the west and to the south.

ECAs: Steep Slope, Potential Landfill

Neighborhood Character: The neighborhood is an eclectic mix of multi-family, single-family, and student housing. Serving as strong anchors to these residential components. The University of Washington and the U-village help to provide plenty of amenities and bring vibrancy to the neighborhood. While not immediate, these urban features are still walkable and easily accessed.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>**

The proposed project is for the design and construction of an apartment building with 20 residential units located above parking for 7 vehicles accessed from NE 46th St.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 21, 2013</b>
--

### **DESIGN PROPOSAL**

The EDG Design Proposal booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

or by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Address: Public Resource Center**  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

---

<sup>1</sup> Unit/parking counts are approximate, the final documents will control.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Several members of the public attending this Early Design Review (EDG) meeting and offered the following comments, issues and concerns:

- Concerned with the design of the north façade and the scale of the structure, as well as the concept of the stair/elevator tower being a dominate feature of the façade.
- Concerned with the proposed surface location of the van accessible stall in the front setback along NE 46<sup>th</sup> St and would prefer this area be used for landscaping.
- Surprised at the scale of the proposal.
- Concerned that the context information presented did not give consideration to the adjacent properties, landmark structures in the area, or the Tudor brick buildings within the area, all of these which have an aesthetic relevance that needs to considered.
- Concerned with the scale and the concept of the stair/elevator tower being a dominate feature of the façade.
- Concerned that the shadow/shading impacts for the proposal will have negative influence on properties to the north.

<b>FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: September 8, 2014</b>
--

The Design Proposal presented at the meeting is available online by entering the project number at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

or by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Address: Public Resource Center**

700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Two members of the public attended the meeting and expressed appreciation of the changes made since the earlier meeting, stating the new design provided a better North façade and better entry, and appreciated the move of the elevator to the South end of the building.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

The applicant summarized the guidance provided at the Early Design Guidance meeting, such as exploring a fourth scheme that moved circulation from the north end to the south end, creating a front yard that forms a sense of entry and celebrates landscape, and consider moving the originally proposed accessible van location near the north property line. In consideration of the difficult topography of the site and zoning requirements, the Board would consider a departure

if it resulted in moving the massing further south on the site. The applicant presented a fourth scheme in response to the Board’s guidance:

1. A southern shift of the building mass, creating a 22’ front yard or entry court that is heavily landscaped.
2. The elevator tower was moved from the north to the south end.
3. Bike storage, garbage and recycling, and 4 parking stalls, (a reduction from the original 7 proposed), including van accessible parking, were located on the garage level.
4. A 10 foot easement on the east property lines was provided to allow parking access, while allowing the building mass to largely avoid the steep slope on the west side of the property.
5. The corridor on the west side of the building was modulated to allow for a larger corridor at unit entries and provide interest to the west façade.
6. The north elevation was broken up and reduced in scale to a townhouse or brownstone scale and largely fenestrated (37% over the code minimum) to create a residential expression.
7. The east façade was composed of recessed decks and projecting bays, clad in metal, a metal stair to provide interest and texture, and decks that extend from the east façade and provide southeast views to Lake Washington. A circulation tower, with two proposed cladding options, was intended to create bookend or anchors for the west façade with the circulation on the north.
8. A bench at the front entry was provided as an amenity for residents and the area is heavily landscaped, creating an entry sequence for residents.
9. The materials used are relatively ordinary construction materials, but used in unique ways to create an interesting and visually interesting architectural expression.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the following **Citywide Design Guidelines** of highest priority for this project.

The guidelines are summarized below. For the full text of all guidelines please visit the [Design Review website](#).

### **A. Site Planning**

**A-1 *Responding to Site Characteristics.*** *The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, The Board as a whole was concerned with the treatment of the north façade. The stair/elevator portion of the structure needs to be carefully designed.

More than one Board member noted that they were also concerned with the southern façade. Balconies may not be the right treatment for the façade. It may be more desirable to use this area as added floor area for the units. Or remove the balconies and move the structure further south on the site and provide more of a northern setback.

One Board member suggested that the design be flipped — placing the stair/elevator tower on the southern façade.

The eastern/western facades as viewed from NE 45<sup>th</sup> St should be carefully designed.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board reviewed the applicant's 4<sup>th</sup> scheme and confirmed that the shifted massing responded well to the early design guidance given.**

**A-3** **Entrances Visible from the Street.** *Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, The Board noted that at the NE 46<sup>th</sup> St ground level, the residential entry needs to be carefully designed with human activity/scale features. The Board expects to see detailed ground level perspectives for NE 46<sup>th</sup> St.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design diagrams showing the residential entry and ground level features.**

**A-4** **Human Activity.** *New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.*

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design diagrams showing ground level residential entry, and the hardscape and landscaping treatments shown at the entry area.**

**A-5** **Respect for Adjacent Sites.** *Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the exterior façades should carefully compose windows and balconies to not overly encroach on the privacy of the adjacent properties. The Board stated that windows and balconies should maximize privacy for both the existing neighbors and the tenants of the proposed building.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design diagrams showing the building setback from the street, the window locations, balcony features and their relationship with the buildings east and west.**

The Board requested clarification about the texture, size and purpose of the CMU site wall at the Northeast corner of the project. The applicant responded that it would be ground face (smooth) CMUs, ranging from 4-8 feet tall, and holds the grade of the entry court. This resulted in a discussion on a way to treat the scale of the retaining wall along the vehicle driveway and how to discourage vandalism/graffiti to the wall. The Board recommended applying a sealant or having trailing vines cascade over the wall.

**A-6** ***Transition Between Residence and Street.** For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.*

See A-1 above.

## **B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

**B-1** ***Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.** Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.*

See A-5 above. At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board chair noted that the applicant will need to provide shade/shadow diagrams at the future design review meetings for the bulk/scale of the structure being proposed.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board approved of the proposed massing and modulated facades. The circulation tower has been moved from the northern portion of the site to the southern portion the site. The west side of the building was modulated to provide interest to the west façade and allow for a larger corridor at the unit entries. The north elevation was broken up and reduced in scale to a townhouse or brownstone scale and largely fenestrated (37% over the code minimum) to create a residential expression. The east façade was composed of recessed decks and projecting bays, a metal stair was added provide interest and texture, and decks that extend from the east façade.**

## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

**C-2** ***Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the basically contemporary architectural character presented. See A-1 above.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the proposed contemporary architectural character and the exterior colors/materials shown. The Board approved the frame element that encloses the exterior stair and elevator tower on the southwest façade. The Board wanted to ensure that adequate stairway access security is provided from the ground floor. The Board approved of the two-tone paneling option provided for the elevator column by the applicant. They agreed it provided identity and interest to the building. The Board noted that the yellow/gold in the printed renderings provided more interest than the materials board sample provided and the color should be adjusted to reflect what was shown in the recommendation packet.**

- C-3** ***Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.*

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the architectural features, elements, and details shown for the ground level hardscapes, landscaping, and lighting.**

- C-4** ***Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.*

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board discussed the color and material palette. The Board was generally favorable towards the material changes and the coloration presented. The Board recommended that the applicant and Planner to work on the final color for stair/elevator element of the structure, for approval by the DPD Land Use Planner. See comments under C-2 above.**

<b>D. Pedestrian Environment</b>
----------------------------------

- D-1** ***Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.*

See A-1 and A-3 above.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design diagrams showing the pedestrian open spaces and entrances.**

The Board questioned the proposed pavers in the entry court. The applicant stated that they would be a complementary color to the proposed CMU site wall materials, but not matching.

**D-6** **Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** *Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the applicant stated locations of all trash and dumpsters to be internal to the building and that no bins or dumpsters will be located outside of the on the building.

**At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the internal trash and dumpster location.**

**D-7** **Personal Safety and Security.** *Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.*

At The Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the proposal must demonstrate the need for the 'van accessible' parking location within the front setback and why an option within or under the structure cannot be provided.

The future presentation to the design review Board needs to show the 'max bicycle parking' that can be provide and the route/location from the right-of-way to within/under the structure.

The future presentation to the design review board needs to show a lighting plan.

**At The Recommendation Meeting, the design presented a route/location from the right-of-way to the van accessible parking that will be located within/under the structure and that max bicycle parking has been provided within/under the structure.**

The Board requested clarification on the lighting plan. The applicant outlined that lower level lighting would be provided in the front court area to provide some light for safety and security, but respect the neighbor's by minimizing the effect on them. Sconces are provided at the utility entry, garage entry, and the south stair. The Board recommended that additional lighting be included at the bike entry on the east façade.

The Board discussed the public comment regarding access of residents to nearby amenities via trespassing on private property, but acknowledged it is outside their purview and the design review process. DPD staff confirmed it is beyond the scope,

but DPD can assist the adjacent property owners with their conversation with Seattle's Department of Transportation on the issue.

**E. Landscaping**

**E-2** ***Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site.** Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.*

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed concern about the location of shrubs greater than 40" in height, and they suggested that those shrubs be located on the south or west portions of the site, not in the entry court.

They also suggested that the plants located on west slope are hearty, as conditions could be difficult.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Final Recommendation meeting, the following departure was requested:

- 1. Structure Façade Length Limits (SMC 23.45.527):** The maximum combined length of all portions of facades within 15 feet of a lot line that is neither a rear lot line nor a street or alley lot line shall not exceed 65 percent of the length of that lot line, except as specified in subsection 23.45.527.B.2. The lot line is 136.75, therefore 136.75 x 65% equals a maximum combined length of 88.89'. Due to the restraints of the site, and the guidance and suggestion of the board, the East and West facades are proposed to exceed the allowable percentage and increase the length to 104'.

Based on discussion and suggestion of the Board at the Early Design Guidance meeting the applicant sought relief from this requirement as a means of altering the original massing. The Board encouraged the applicant to move the stair and elevator massing from the northern façade to the southern façade, resulting in a larger setback from NE 46<sup>th</sup> St. By allowing a longer west facing façade it allowed the applicant to move the entire massing, including the elevator tower, creating a larger buffer of landscaped amenity are to the north along NE 46<sup>th</sup> St. This provides a design that better meets the intent of guidelines: A-1, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, B-1, C-3, D-1, D-7 and E-2.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board unanimously recommended approval of the departure as the design better meets the intent of guidelines noted above.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Monday, September 08, 2014, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Monday, September 08, 2014 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, three Design Review Board members recommended **conditional approval**. See the Board Recommended Conditions below.

## **DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. All landscaping shrubs over 40" in height should be restricted to the south or west portions of the site.
2. To reduce vandalism opportunities and address the blank wall near the entry court, the wall should be sealed and the height reduced (if possible) or additional draping landscaping should be provided from above.
3. Provide additional exterior lighting at the bike entry on the East façade.
4. Provide adequate security for south stair by fencing or gating the structure.
5. For the 2 toned elevator cladding, adjust the color palette to more closely reflect the 2 colors depicted in the printed rendering.